

Greetings, Illustrious Class of 1973!

It was great to see so many at our 45th reunion two weeks ago as I write this. We set a record (that's becoming par for the course) for attendance at a 45th reunion with about 650 registered for the Friday dinner and about 575 who showed up. Reunion committee chairman Bill **Diffley**, CS-11, applied two tried and true principles in pulling it off—KISS and “keep the main thing the main thing”—and they worked. The main thing was reconnecting, so we didn't have a lot of extra stuff that distracted from that. The feedback I've received has been resoundingly positive across the board. Kudos to Diff and the entire Reunion Committee!



Brig Gen Mal Wakin speaking to cadets in the Center for Character and Leadership Development

Highlighting Friday's dinner was the installment of Brig Gen Mal Wakin (USAF, Retired), as an honorary member of the Illustrious Class of 1973. General Wakin spent more than 50 years teaching Philosophy and mentoring cadets and faculty at the Academy in the field of Ethics. The Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD) was long his vision before seeing it become a reality in the 1990s. His contributions to the Academy and the Air Force align perfectly with our class focus on leadership and character development, so his induction as an honorary member of our class is most appropriate.

General Wakin is only the third person to be inducted as an honorary member of an Academy class, after President Eisenhower into the Class of 1959 and President Kennedy into the Class of 1963.

Class President Ron **Scott**, CS-34, presented Gen Wakin the plaque to the right during the induction ceremony, recognizing his status as an honorary member of the class. The inscription is expanded below.



Brigadier General Malham M. Wakin

Honorary Member, Class of 1973
United States Air Force Academy



The Airman's Creed

I am an American Airman.

I am a Warrior.

I have answered my Nation's call.

I am an American Airman.

My mission is to Fly, Fight, and Win.

I am faithful to a Proud Heritage,

A Tradition of Honor,

And a Legacy of Valor.

I am an American Airman.

Guardian of Freedom and Justice,

My Nation's Sword and Shield,

Its Sentry and Avenger.

I defend my Country with my Life.

I am an American Airman.

Wingman, Leader, Warrior.

I will never leave an Airman behind,

I will never falter,

And I will not fail.

There were several presentations at the class meeting on Thursday of the reunion. All the reports/concepts presented were approved, along with new class officers Ron **Scott**, CS-34, President; Bill **Diffley**, CS-11, Vice President; John **Stefonik**, CS-20, Secretary; Kelly **McCullar**, CS-39, Treasurer; Mike **Arnett**, CS-09; Class Scribe; and A.J. **Ranft**, CS-11/17, Class Senator. The minutes and accompanying presentations are posted on the class website.

- Bob **Munson**, CS-34, updated us on our 40th Reunion class gift endowing the National Character and Leadership Symposium (NCLS).
- Steve **Lorenz**, CS-15, introduced the Forged in Blue concept as a way to tie classes of the future to the heritage of the Long Blue Line. Participating grads would donate their class rings back to the Academy when they pass on. Those rings, along with rings from other classes, will become part of the stock from which future classes' rings are cast, giving legacy and new classes a tangible connection.
- Bob **Munson** introduced a 50th Reunion class gift concept that centers on including the Academy in our estate planning—we don't plan to ask for more cash donations after the big push at our 40th.
- Bill **Diffley** introduced our 2023 Legacy Class Project. Since 2023 will graduate 50 years after us, we are their Legacy Class. We will need plenty of class participation to pull this off properly, so standby for calls for assistance. The Class of 2023 reports to the Academy next June!

Per Dave **Ellis**, CS-32, the Parachute Team Wings of Blue (PTWOB) were going to “fly” an “Illustrious 73” flag into the stadium prior to the Navy game, but low clouds prevented the jump. Dave said he'll keep the flag for the 50th and do some more to embellish it in the meantime. Dave had an “in” on getting the team to fly our flag into the stadium: his son is on the team.



CS-32 Roadrunners at the 45th,
L-R. Seated: Charlie
Clatterbaugh, Paul **Taylor**
Standing: Gordy **Britten**, Gary
Niskala, Stu **Willis**, Pat **Jordan**,
Bill **Drury**, Dave **Ellis**, Frank
Sanchez

A follow-up to the good-news story in the last Class News column about Larry **Radov's** (CS-05), being reunited with his lost class ring: he wore both the lost ring and the replacement to the reunion!

After I sent out the news of Marcus **Bolton's** (CS-02) passing, Dan **Pierre**, CS-39, sent a note, part of which I have included below, as it may be pertinent to others.

So sorry to hear about another '73 classmate passing. Marcus was a fellow Catholic Cadet, and apparently retired in Hendersonville, TN just outside of Nashville. I and Denise live just an hour south, and I didn't even know Marcus was in our area.

Your notification got my wife and I talking. Now that I am retired (effective early June of this year), I have been updating retirement investments and doing some estate planning. And I do not even know where to turn regarding contacts at USAFA for final interment arrangements and planning. Could you point me in the right direction so I can include this in my estate planning update?

In answer to Dan's question about where to go to find out info about final interment arrangements: the Academy guru on grad & spouse interment is Ms. Janet Edwards, Mortuary Affairs Officer, 719-333-3323 (office). Feel free to contact her directly. Our class has had a lot of interaction with her in the past months, and she is one dedicated soul, having been known to answer her cell phone while hiking up Pikes Peak. You can also find out a lot of info on the Academy Mortuary Affairs website, <https://www.usafa.af.mil/Units/Mission-Support-Group/Mortuary-Affairs/>. Check out the FAQs before you contact Janet.

While in Angel Fire, NM after the reunion, John and Suzy **Wigington**, CS-11/14 learned about the National Veteran's Wellness and Healing Center there. The center focuses on vets who suffer from PTSD. John asked me to pass on that if you know of anyone who has PTSD, you might point them to the center's website, <http://veteranswellnessandhealing.org>.

Charlie **Clatterbaugh**, CS-32, recently participated in two events in the Charlotte, NC area. On Memorial Day, Charlie was the Air Force speaker at the dedication ceremony for Veteran's Park (right). Every branch of the military was represented, and the event was standing room only. Charlie said he found it a very humbling experience. He also attended the inaugural ceremony for the North Carolina Military Veterans Hall of Fame. At the ceremony, he met COL Walter J. Marm, (US Army, Retired), a Medal of Honor (MOH) recipient. Then-1st Lt Marm was awarded the MOH for his actions in LZ-XRAY on 14 Nov 1965 in Viet Nam. He honored Charlie by "coining" him with his MOH coin at the ceremony.





Medal of Honor Recipient COL Walter J. Marm (US Army, Retired) and Col Charlie **Clatterbaugh** (USAF, Retired) at North Carolina Military Veterans Hall of Fame

Jay **Jabour**, CS-07, was featured in in the September 2018 issue of **Checkpoints** in an article called The Wright Stuff. As president of a non-profit in Dayton called the Wright B Flyer, Inc., Jay flew five firsties in the organization's 1910 Wright Brothers airplane look-alike. The purpose was to introduce future Air Force officers to the rich history of flight. Can't think of a more memorable way to do that! We'll see if we can get the article posted to our class website.

Speaking of Dayton and the history of flight, Jack **Hudson**, CS-25, has stepped down as the director of the National Museum of the United States Air Force. Haven't heard yet what his plans are for the future.

Tom **Butler**, CS-10, reports he couldn't stand being retired from flying, so has taken a position with Jet Linx flying a Hawker 900XP based out of Dulles International Airport, VA.

Bruce and Cat **Golson**, CS-20, have hung it up on Falcon Ridge outside of Waynesville, NC. He says, yes, they do see falcons frequently from their little ridge.

Denny **Danielson**, CS-11, sent in a pic of his son Paul with proud parents upon his graduation from Helicopter UPT (UPT-H). Denny says Paul is following in his steps, having been assigned to CV-22's which replaced the H-53s Denny flew.



Denny **Danielson** and wife Sharrie with son Paul at his UPT-H graduation

Having flow his Carbon Cub cross-country with squadronmate Stalker **Reed** (see Jan 2017 Class News), Alan **Kinback**, CS-07, is also flying with LightHawk (lighthawk.org) and other non-profits. Pix taken from his airplane are being used at www.conservancy.org/ripple-effect.

Tom Kennedy sent in a report on 31st Squadron after the deadline for the hard-copy Class News column:

Three members of the 31st Squadron Grim Reapers made it to the 45th reunion: Howard "Mitch" Mitchell along with his bride, Tami, and their young son, Howie. They were joined by Phil and Chris Yavorsky along with Tom and Betty Kennedy. While our group was small this time around, we still had a great time and finally enjoyed watching our Falcons defeat Navy. Thanks to all those who helped make this a great memory. Most of the remainder of the squadron responded in some way, but were otherwise occupied.



Dan and Robin Connolly stayed in Kansas City as their son, Sean, was inducted as the first lacrosse player, into the Rockhurst Hall of Fame. We hope to see them all at the 50th.



Tami, Howie and Mitch **Mitchell** at Carlos' Bistro in Manitou Springs



The only other news to report this time around is that Phil Yavorsky and Tom Kennedy enjoyed a "golf week" (left) during late August in the Scott AFB area. Began the week at the final day of the 100th PGA Championship in St Louis followed by 5 days of golf (90 holes) on different courses everyday. Great time highlighted by a dinner at the new Hofbrauhaus St Louis in Belleville IL.

Rob Horton, CS-03, reported that Thirsty Third has not had great representation at class reunions. To reconnect, this summer he took a motorcycle trip and “forced himself upon” as many squadronmates as he could on the East Coast. In an interesting coincidence, he started his trip on June 23rd, our in-processing day back in 1969. His write-up below is also in the 3rd Squadron section of the class website.

45th Solo Mini Reunion Motorcycle East Coast Tour

Purpose: Visit as many Thirsty Third classmates as possible in one week on a motorcycle.

Prologue: In the last 8-10 years, our classmates from 1973 (Thirsty Third) started a round robin of email communications. I believe the stimulus for this connection after 35 years of very little interaction between us was the effort Vince Parisi put into a Word document containing each of our addresses, phone numbers and most importantly – our email addresses. That was a great idea Vince. Thank you! Usually, around the anniversary of our arrival at the Academy in 1969, or our graduation in 1973, someone would send a mass email reflecting on the fact that we had this shared experience. Inevitably, many of our squadron mates would chime in with a comment or update, using the Reply All, and we got a chance to briefly connect again. Very briefly.

We have thrown around suggestions among ourselves for conducting a Thirsty Third reunion somewhere in a central location. Vince came up with GPS coordinates to calculate the central location. That seemed like an excellent idea but the result was a location that was convenient to no one and universally avoidable by everyone. Which led me to this summer’s 45th Solo Mini Reunion Motorcycle East Coast Tour, or 45-SMRMECT.

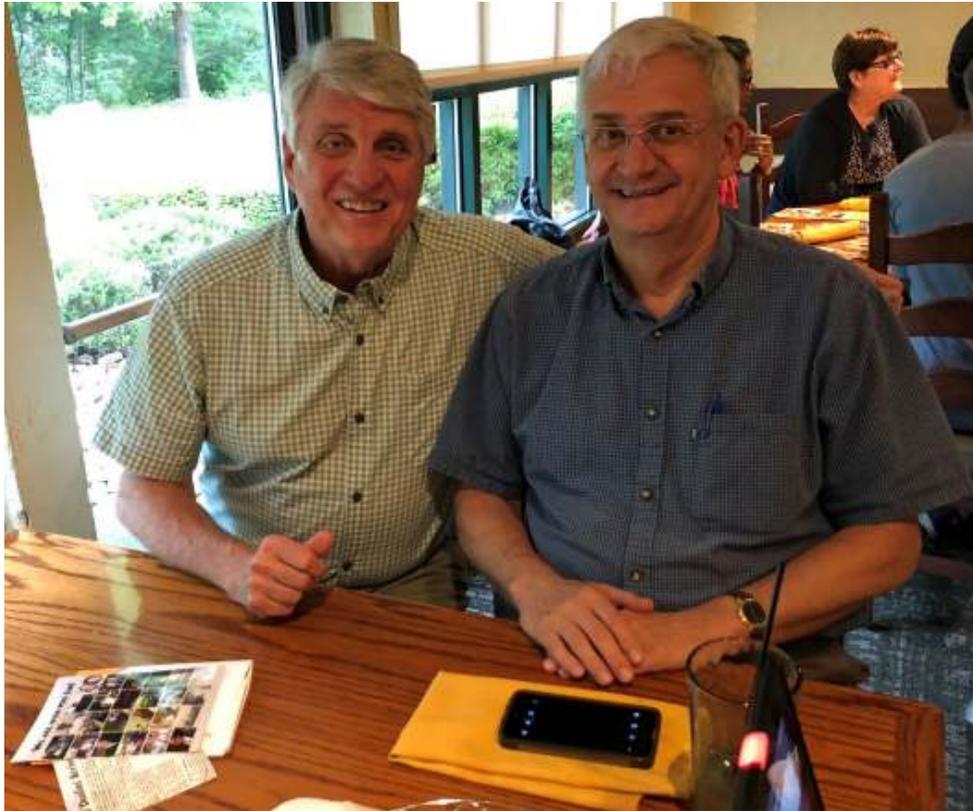
I intended to visit every classmate located on the East Coast. I sent out a proposal to 8 guys and expected to maybe get 3 positive replies. To my surprise, I heard from 7 and everyone was agreeable to let me barge in on their lives for a day or two. The Reunion Tour was on. It would be simple, or so I thought until I began to lay down concrete departure and arrival times for each stop I would make. I was unable to visit two individuals but hope to connect with Dan and Pete in the not too distant future. I want to thank my hosts, in order of appearance:

Fred Beckmann, Steve and Terri Anderson, Ed Preble, Rob Haylock, Skip Vogler, Todd and Diana LaVigne.

The actual trip log, shown below, is EDT except Alabama (CDT). Besides the heat issue (not a problem, just a consideration), I only had two negative occurrences and neither one became a problem. I lost my spare key in VA and I encountered a blinding thunderstorm in AL. No problem - Steve and Terri found the lost key and I made it through the blinding thunderstorm without any serious incident.

Date	Departure Loc. and Time	Arrival Time and Loc.	Hours	Miles
23-Jun	Glastonbury CT 0630	1215 Ellicott City, MD	5 3/4	345
24-Jun	Ellicott City, MD 0645	1215 Smithfield, VA	5 1/2	225
26-Jun	Smithfield, VA 0400	1215 Windsor, SC	8 1/4	430

27-Jun	Windsor, SC	0520	1110	Gainesville, FL	5 3/4	350
28-Jun	Gainesville, FL	0415	1430	Madison, AL	11 1/2	545
29-Jun	Madison, AL	0745	1600	Asheville, NC	7 1/4	340
30-Jun	Asheville, NC	0520	1500	Charlottesville, VA	9 1/2	360
2-Jul	Charlottesville, VA	0130	1130	Glastonbury, CT	10	490
Totals					63 1/2	3,085



Ellicott City, MD. Rob Horton and Fred Beckmann. First time together in 45 years and wonderful to hear how Fred's language skills played a major factor in his military and civilian careers.

Smithfield, VA. Rob Horton and Steve Anderson and Vann (Rob's motorcycle). Terri, Steve's wife, made sure we did not party too hearty unless she was along to enjoy it with us.



Proud owner Steve Anderson, along with Rob Horton. Yes, that is Steve's ORIGINAL 914 purchased back in 1972. He has kept it in pristine shape over the years. Did we get big or did the car just get smaller? Steve offered to let me drive the beast but I thought better of it. I was not ready to kill a 46 year old time machine.

Windsor, SC. Rob Horton and Ed Preble. Note his three beautiful horses in the background. I call his new place Horse Heaven but I think he calls it Desert Breeze.



Gainesville, FL. Rob Haylock, Skip Vogler and Rob Horton. I had the afternoon to catch up with Rob Haylock while Skip was slaving away at work. We sampled a bourbon (or two) at lunch. The waitress kept mixing the two of us up, just like we were back at the Academy. I suggested she call him "*Haylock Not Horton*" and everything was fine from that point on.



Skip joined us after his grueling day at work and hosted a lovely dinner at Mark's Place (no relation to Cuban). It was great fun having all three of us together again. It did not feel like it had been 45 years since we last spoke to each other.....until I found out about the Rob's "pirate thing". And then I thought – yeah, maybe it has been 45 years after all.

Madison, AL. Rob Horton and Todd LaVigne, in front of his awesome custom bar. He even let me stand inside it. Todd and Diana regaled me with countless stories of their exploits overseas. Of great interest to me was the detail each of them could fill in on the historical significance, as well as the current insight of any region we were discussing. I think if I had spent two more days there, I could have picked up my Associates Degree in European history. Very entertaining Todd and Diana.



Blue Ridge Parkway, NC. I'm finally done with my mini-reunion stops and heading up to Charlottesville, via the Blue Ridge Parkway, to visit my son. I stopped at sunrise (about 5:50AM) to catch a photo of the setting moon, located just above Vann.



Final photo of the trip, taken on the Blue Ridge Parkway. It was a great ride on the BRP, especially early in the morning without a lot of visitor traffic.

That's it. No pictures from the day returning to Glastonbury. The best part of my final leg home was the first couple of hours on the N. Blue Ridge Turnpike, followed by the Zachary Taylor Highway. The only problem being that it was 2:30AM and too dark to see much beyond my headlight. By the time it was light out, I was well into the interstate highway system, heading home as fast as the posted speed limits would allow me to go.

"Great trip but too short." As I think about that comment, I believe it applies to life in general. So, get out there and take **The Trip** while you can.

Robert Horton *"As always"*

At <http://www.pineapplejuice.net/ham-pine/?p=33>, you'll find that "73" is ham radio shorthand for Best Regards.

So, for now, 73!

Mike Arnett

"Here's a toast...to the host...of the men we boast...the U.S. Air Force!"